

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner *September 9, 1997*

First of all, thank you, Steve, and thank you, Alan, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here. This is meant to be more of a conversation than a speech, and I want it to be so; I'll be quite brief.

We have had a very good year as a nation, and we've had a good year here in Washington. And it was capped by the passage of what I think is an excellent balanced budget agreement, not only because it does bring the budget into balance for the first time since 1969, which is a long time to wait, and therefore changes the whole dynamic of what we talk about here in Washington—we Democrats have been literally paralyzed for years and years and years in the efforts to do what a lot of what we thought ought to be done because everything was seen through the prism of the deficit; not so anymore—but also because this agreement has some remarkable positive things about it, including the biggest investment in health care since 1965, most of which will go to insure 5 million children who don't have health insurance now; biggest investment in education since 1965, which will go to put more children in Head Start, to put computers in our schools and to hook them all up, all the classrooms and the libraries, to the Internet by the year 2000; and has the biggest increase in help for people to go to college since the GI bill was passed 50 years ago. And that's just part of what's in this budget. It's a very fine budget.

But today I went to American University to talk a little bit about what we're going to try to do between now and the end of the year. It's all very well to say, "Well, we've got 13 million more jobs, and we've got crime coming down and welfare rolls dropping and a lot of the poorest neighborhoods in the country are beginning to be revitalized." But the truth is there is still a lot to be done, and we have a very busy agenda.

And you may not want to talk about it tonight, but let me just go through a list of some of the things that still have to be done. Number one: This balanced budget agreement has to be implemented. The balanced budget plan which was passed which I signed is a 5-year budget plan. It funds Medicare and Medicaid and all

the other so-called entitlement programs and has the tax cuts in it. But anything that requires an annual appropriation, like education or transportation, we have to actually pass a bill every year, including this year, to make that budget agreement real.

So Steve talked about the national standards today—we are having quite a little vigorous debate in Washington about whether we ought to have national standards and whether there should be a test to measure whether every fourth grader can read and every eighth grader can do math. I think it's a miracle we've done as well as we have without doing it, since we're the only major country in the world that doesn't have both kinds of standards. And I hope we will have, and I intend to fight hard for it.

Secondly, we're going to try to pass the juvenile justice bill that will help to keep more of our kids out of gangs, off drugs, and away from guns. And it's very important.

We're going to try to prevail, for the fifth time in 5 years, but this time I think we've got a better chance and more visibility than ever before, with campaign finance legislation. I supported the bill every year for the last 5 years, and every year for the last 4 years the campaign finance reform legislation has been killed by a Senate filibuster. And as you know, it only takes 41 Senators to do it, and the people that did it before say they're going to do it again, even though some of their folks are no longer in the Senate. They may do, but this time we'll have at least the glare of day on it.

We are going to seek, starting tomorrow, in a very public way the authority that has been given to Presidents since the 1970's to negotiate comprehensive trade agreements. And this will be somewhat controversial, mostly because of people I think looking backward and thinking that the past trade agreements haven't been so great. But here are the facts: We've negotiated over 200 trade agreements since I've been President. We're now the number one exporter in the world; 70 percent of our export growth has come from our own hemisphere and from Latin America. And we estimate that about 25 percent of the 13 million jobs we've got have come

because of the expanded trade we've done. And I think we ought to do more of it.

Latin America will grow, Asia will grow quicker than the global economy. We are 5 percent of the world's population. We have 20 percent of the world's wealth. If we want to keep it we've got to sell to the other 95 percent. It's not complicated.

And so I hope that we will prevail in making that argument, because I'm convinced that more than money is at stake. Our world leadership in supporting democracy and open markets and a future where people work together and work out their problems, instead of fight them out, is very much at stake in this debate over the President's role in world trade.

Finally, we will have a major effort later in the year to reach consensus in our country—and it's going to be difficult to do—on a commitment that I need to make in December about how much we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by early in the next century.

I am convinced the problem of climate change is real. I know the American people have not fully focused on it yet, but literally, the overwhelming majority of scientists who have studied this problem say that our environment is changing dramatically because of the volume of greenhouse gases that we're putting into it. And it's fixing to get worse if we don't do something about it because all these developing countries—most importantly China, which is the biggest one—are getting rich the same way we did, that is, by burning fuels which put great stress on the atmosphere. We have got to turn this around.

And the United States cannot be dragged kicking and screaming into this. And I believe—I don't believe; I know—we can find a way to do it and grow the economy. This will be very controversial. And I hope that I can get a lot of support from the business people in this country and from labor organizations and from others who realize that we have to pass along to our children and our grandchildren an environment in which they can live, or all the economic growth in the world won't amount to a hill of beans if people can't breathe and enjoy their lives and feel that we're in a balanced environment. So that's a big issue.

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State is in the Middle East; we are struggling to make some progress in Bosnia; things look better in Northern Ireland than they have in a good long while. And the Chinese President is coming here before the end of the year, and I'm going to Latin America. And the country is in good shape. We're moving in the right direction. And those of you who have supported me made it possible, and for that I am very grateful. But I ask you to keep the energy behind our efforts. We've got to keep going. We've got to keep moving forward. We can't rest. And there's a lot more to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 p.m. in the Chandelier Room at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; and President Jiang Zemin of China.

Remarks Supporting Renewal of Fast-Track Trading Authority *September 10, 1997*

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, members of the administration. Mr. Lang, thank you for coming all the way from Iowa. And Susan, thank you for coming all the way from California; all else fails, you can give speaking lessons. *[Laughter]*

I also would like to thank the Members of Congress who have come. I see Senator Moynihan and Senator Baucus and a significant delegation from the House, including Congressmen

Matsui and Fazio who have often been on the forefront of our trade issues. It's nice to see former Chairman Gibbons out there and former Congressmen Carr and Anthony. There may be—and former Congressman, our Ambassador to Mexico, Jim Jones. There are a lot of other former Members perhaps here, but I appreciate all of you being here to support this endeavor today.